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Greedy of praise, he followed Titian step by step, ever expecting an explosion of admiration. Beside him walked Dominic the Red, his eye flashing with all the confidence of unconquerable stupidity. Nevertheless, Titian did not fully express himself. Always courteous and possessing tact, he managed to use words which expressed interest and attention, but, which in no way compromised his judgment as a connoisseur. His polished attitudes, and gracious smiles, contrasted with the darkened brow and austere countenance of Tintoret. Although less intimate, perhaps, with the Zuccati, Robusti was much more indignant than Titian at the wickedness of their rivals. In the mind of Titian, himself in the habit of cherishing profound hatred and unconquerable antipathies, the conduct of the Bianchini found, if not an excuse, at least a more indulgent appreciation of professional jealousies and the artist's ambition. Perhaps also, Tintoret, reflecting upon the persecutions he had been compelled to submit to on the part of Titian, wished to convey a warrantable reproach to him indirectly, by showing his horror and contempt for these kind of things. He left the chapel of St. Isidore without having opened his lips, and without having once turned his eyes upon the persons who accompanied him.

But when beneath the great dome, and he had before his eyes the work of the Zuccati, he broke forth in eloquent admiration; his fine austere features glowed with the fire of enthusiasm, and he pointed at the perfections of that work with generous warmth. Titian, who was an intimate friend of old Sebastian, and who had given many excellent lessons to the young Zuccati, joined in the eulogium, without however, depreciating the work of the Bianchini, in relation to whom, he maintained a very prudent bearing. But the procurator-cashier, impatient at the success of the Zuccati, took up the word.

"Messer," said he, to the illustrious masters, "I would have you observe, that we did not come here to see productions in painting, but productions in mosaic. It matters very little to the state, if the hand of the Virgin be more or less modelled according to the rules of your art; it is still less important that the leg of St. Isidore should have the calf a little too high or a little too low. All that will do for discussion" —

"How is that, by the body of Christ?" exclaimed Titian, who, on hearing this blasphemy, forgot for a moment his prudent courtesy; "it matters little to the state that mosaists should not be acquainted with drawing, and that mosaic need not be an elegant and faithful reproduction of the painter's work? It is the first time I ever heard of such a doctrine, Monsignor, and I shall need all the respect your judgment inspires me with, to become of your opinion."

Nothing worked up the erroneous convictions of the procurator-treasurer like contradiction. "And I, Messer Tiziano," cried he, with excitement, "will insist that all this is nothing but minutia and puerility. These are nothing but school quarrels and studio discussions, in which the dignity of the magistracy should not be compromised. Charged by the republic to watch over its interests and to secure true economy and

upright dealing in the public finances, the procurators will not permit the workmen of Saint Mark to fail in their engagements merely to please the lovers of painting."

"I did not think," said Francesco Zuccato, in a feeble voice, and casting a mournful glance at his work, that I could fail in my engagements, by attending to the faithful drawing of my figure and by conforming conscientiously to all the rules of my art."

"I know as well as you do, Messer, the rules of your art," cried the procurator, flushed with anger. "You will not make me believe that a mosaist must need be a painter? The republic pays you to copy servilely and faithfully the painter's cartoons, and provided you fasten your stones properly and solidly to the wall, provided you know how to employ good materials and to produce the effects of which they are capable, it matters very little what you know about the rules of painting and the laws of drawing. By the ducal horn! if you were such great artists, the republic would do well to be yet more economical. There would be no necessity for paying Messer Vecelli and Messer Robusti for designing your models. You might be free to compose, arrange and draw your own subjects. Unfortunately, we have not yet sufficient confidence in your mastery of the art of painting to trust it so entirely."

"And yet, Monsignor," said Titian, who had recovered self-control, and who knew how to give a gracious expression to the smile of contempt flickering upon his lips, I will presume to object to your signory, that to know how to copy faithfully a good drawing, it is necessary for oneself to be a good designer; without that the cartoons of Raphael might be confided to the first raw pupil, and the presence of a great model under his eyes might suffice to render a scholar a great artist. But this is not the case, your signory will permit me to say it, with all the respect I entertain for his opinions; but it is one thing to govern men by sublime wisdom, and another thing to amuse them by superficial talents. We should be much embarrassed, we poor artisans, if like your signory, we were obliged to hold the reins of government with a firm and liberal hand; but" —

"But thou wilt pretend to say, flatterer," interrupted the mollified procurator, "that in regard to painting and mosaic, thou art better informed than ourselves. Thou wilt not deny at least, that solidity is one of the indispensable conditions belonging to this kind of work, and if instead of employing stone, crystal, marble and enamel, they used pasteboard, wood, oil and varnish, thou wilt grant that the funds of the Republic have not reached their true destination."

At this Titian was slightly embarrassed; for he was not aware to what extent the accusation of the Bianchini could be proved, and he feared to compromise the Zuccati by an imprudent admission.

"I will at all events deny," said he, after a moment's hesitation, "that the substitution of materials constitutes fraud, if it is proved, as I believe it, that the brush can be employed in certain places in mosaic-work with as much solidity as enamel."

"Indeed! we shall soon see that, Messer

Vecelli," said the procurator; "for we will not harbor a suspicion of your integrity in this matter. Let sand and sponges be brought here, and by the horn! let all these panels be well rubbed."

The almost expiring eyes of Francesco brightened, and he turned with a contemptuous glance towards the inscription, where the word *saxis* replaced the barbarism *saxibus*. Should he be condemned for the substitution of a single letter, it seemed as if he found consolation for it, in the hope of a public exposition of the ignorant procurator's blunder. Melchior divined his thought, observed the direction of his eyes, and managed to divert attention to other portions of the dome.

The mosaic of the Zuccati, scrubbed and washed at every point, resisted the trial perfectly, and there was no part discovered which would fall or threaten to fall. The procurator-treasurer began to fear that the blind hatred of the Bianchini and his own prejudices, had involved him in an affair not very honorable to himself, when Vincent Bianchini, approaching the two archangels, one of which, was a portrait of Valerio and the other of Francesco Zuccato, said with assurance:—

"It is certain that wood and painted pasteboard may resist sand and a wet sponge; but it is not so certain that they will resist the action of time, and behold a proof of it."

Thus speaking, he drew his dagger, and striking into the naked breast of the archangel representing Francesco Zuccato, just over the heart, he detached a morsel of something the color of flesh, which he cut in two pieces with the blade of his poniard, and which he presented to the procurators. The fragment passed from hand to hand, and Titian himself, was forced to admit that it was merely a piece of wood.

THE MODEL AND THE MOULD.

THE smooth clay-model stands encased with plaster,
The fire beneath is rising fold on fold,
The image wrought so deftly by the Master,
Pours out below and leaves the perfect mould.

The sculptor's statue, thus at last returning
To the clay it was, its purpose is attained,—
The mould is hardened by the self-same burning,
That liquefied the model it contained.

This fire of years is also at its labors,
Steeling our former characters, until
The body gone, we leave them to our neighbors,
A ready mould for casting good or ill.

The only difference—we have no artist,
Ourselves must scrape the model at great cost,—
If aided by the light that Thou impartest,
Oh God, the labor is not wholly lost.

'Tis thus Thou makest us, ere we are stricken,
The forgers of the fates of those to come,
The sole exemplars all their hearts to quicken,
To lives of good or ill to Christendom.

The fire is burning, Fortune blows the bellows,
By Sin and Chance the fuel is uprolled,
We live and die alike to serve our fellows,
In life a model, and in death a mould.